The 25th Day of March

☩ The Annunciation of our All-holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

Note: *According to the Julian (Old) Calendar, this Feast may fall between Thursday of the third week in Lent and Wednesday of Bright Week; and presently, according to the "Revised Julian" (New) Calendar, this Feast may fall between Friday of the First Week and no later than Thursday of the 5th week. Adjustments may have to be made by those following the New Calendar as the Typicon does not take the earlier occurrence of this day into account. In all cases, however, the Typicon, Triodion, Pentecostarion, and the Festal Menaion must be consulted for the proper ordering of these services.*

The general order of service is as follows: [1]

1. If the day of the Feast, March 25th, falls on a ***Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday in Lent:*** *on the eve of th Feast (March 24th) Great Vespers of the Feast are served, followed on* ***Wednesday*** *by the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts (also when the Thursday of the Great Canon coincides with the eve of the Feast). At the Vigil, Great Compline is followed by Matins; on the day of the Feast itself, the "Vesperal Liturgy" (i.e., Great Vespers followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom) is served.*

2. If the the day of the Feast, March 25th, falls on a ***Saturday in Lent,*** *on the eve of the Feast (****Friday,*** *March 24th), Great Vespers are served, followed by the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts. At the Vigil, Great Compline is followed by Matins; on the day of the Feast itself, the Liturgy of John Chrysostom is celebrated at the usual hour, but is NOT preceded by Vespers; Great Vespers are sung on Saturday evening forming part of the Vigil Service for the Sunday following.*

3. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on a ***Sunday in Lent,*** *on Saturday afternoon (March 24th) Small Vespers are served. At the Vigil, Great Vespers are followrd by Matins; Great Compline is NOT said. On Sunday, March 25th, the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great is celebrated at the usual hour, NOT preceded by Great Vespers, which are served later in the usual way.*

4. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on a ***Monday in Lent or Holy Week,*** *on Sunday afternoon (March 24th) Small Vespers are served. At the Vigil, Great Vespers are followed by Matins; Great Compline is NOT said. On March 25th the "Vesperal Liturgy" (i.e., Great Vespers followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom) is served.*

5. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on ***Tuesday or Wednesday in Holy Week,*** *the order of services is as in 1 (above): on the eve of the Feast, March 24th, the Liturgy of the Presanctified follows Vespers.*

6. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on ***Thursday in Holy Week,*** *the order of services is as in 1 (above), except: that on the day of the Feast itself, March 25th, the Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrataed. On the eve of the Feast, March 24th, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts follows Vespers.*

7. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on ***Good Friday,*** *on the eve of the Feast, March 24th (Holy Thursday), Great Vespers arae served, followed by the Liturgy of St. Basil. Great Compline is NOT said. Matins of the Feast are combined with the service of the Twelve Gospels. On the day of the feast itself, March 25th, the "Vesperal Liturgy" (i.e., Great Vespers followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom) is served.*

8. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on ***Holy Saturday,*** *on the eve of the Feast, March 24th (Good Friday), Great Vespers are served. There is NO Liturgy. Great Compline is NOT said. The Matins of the Feast are combined with the Great Vespers of Holy Friday and the procession of the Plashchanitsa (Epitaphios). On the day of the feast itself, March 25th, the "Vesperal Liturgy" (i.e., Great Vespers followed by the Liturgy of St. Basil) is served.*

9. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on ***Great and Holy Pascha,*** *on the eve of the Feast, March 24th (Holy Saturday), the "Vesperal Liturgy" (i.e., Great Vespers followed by the Liturgy of St. Basil) is served. Great Compline is NOT said. The Matins of the Feast are combined with the Matis of the Resurrection, followed by the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom.*

10. If the day of the Feast, March 25th falls on ***Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday in Bright Week,*** *on the eve of the Feast, March 24th Small Vespers are served. The Vigil begins with Great Vespers are followed by Matins. Great Compline is not said. On the day of the Feast itself, March 25th, the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is served.*

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[1] Mother Mary and Kallistos Ware: *The Festal Menaion,* St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 1990, pp. 435-437.

If the feast falls on a fast day, we begin Vespers without a Kathisma reading and without prostrations.

*If the **eve of the Feast falls on a Saturday or Sunday,** we begin with the*

Small Evening Service

At "Lord, I call...," 4 stikhera, in Tone 4: *To the melody, "Called from on high...."*

Taking pity on His creation /
And bending down in His tender mercy /
The Maker hastens to dwell in the womb of a Maiden, the Child of God. /
To her the great archangel came exclaiming: /
'Rejoice, O thou who art full of divine grace, /
Our God is now with thee. /
Be not afraid of me, the chief commander of the armies of the King, /
For thou hast found the grace that thy mother Eve once lost: ///
And thou shalt conceive and bring forth Him who is of one essence with the Father. *(Twice)*

Mary said to the angel: /
'Strange is thy speech and strange is thine appearance /
Strange thy sayings and strange are thy disclosures. /
I am a maid who knows not wedlock, lead me not astray. /
Thou sayest that I shall conceive the uncontainable One. /
But how shall my womb contain Him whom the wide spaces of heaven cannot contain?'
'O Virgin, let the tent of Abraham that once contained God teach thee: /
For it prefigured thy womb, ///
Which now receives the Godhead.

Having reached the city of Nazareth, /
Gabriel now salutes thee, the living city of Christ the King, /
And he cries aloud to thee: Rejoice, thou who art blessèd and full of divine grace: /
Thou shalt hold in thy womb God made flesh, /
And through thee in His compassion /
He shall call back mankind to its ancient state. /
Blessèd is the divine and immortal fruit of thy womb, ///
Who through thee grants the world great mercy.

Glory..., now and ever…, in Tone 1: *(by Byzantius)*

In the sixth month the chief of the angelic hosts /
Was sent to thee, pure Virgin, /
To declare unto thee the word of salvation /

And greet thee, saying: /
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: /
The Lord is with thee. /
Thou shalt bring forth a Son, begotten before the ages from the Father, ///
And He shall save His people from their sins.

At the Apostikha, these stikhera, in Tone 8:

Gabriel, the leader of the of the powers on-High /
Flew down and greet the Virgin, saying: /
Rejoice, thou pure chariot of the Divinity: /
God hath loved thee from eternity, /
And He hath chosen thee for His dwelling-place. /
As servant of thy Master am I come to proclaim His coming. ///
Thou shalt bring forth the Lord, yet shalt remain incorrupt!

Verse: From day to day proclaim the salvation of our God!

'Why is thy visage blazing with fire?' /
Said the pure one to Gabriel in her amazement. /
'What is thy rank and what the value of thy words? /
Thou dost announce to me that I shall bring forth a child /
Yet I have no experience of man. /
Lead me not astray, O man, with crafty words, ///
As the crafty serpent once led Eve our mother astray.'

Verse: Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

The Most-holy Spirit of God shall come upon thee, O pure Lady, /
Thou dwelling-place of the Divinity, /
And the power of the Most-High shall overshadow thee; /
And thou shalt bring forth a Child who shall preserve intact thy virginity. /
He is the Son without lineage; ///
And having appeared, in His good pleasure He shall save His people.

Glory..., now and ever…, in Tone 4:

In the sixth month the Archangel Gabriel was sent to the pure Virgin, /
And with his greeting: 'Rejoice!' he brought good tidings /
That the Redeemer would come forth from her /
And so, accepting his salutation with faith /
She conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God /
Who wast pleased to become man ineffably ///
For the salvation of our souls.

After the Prayer of St. Symeon, the Trisagion through the Lord's Prayer. Then:

The Troparion of the Feast, in Tone 4:

Today is the beginning of our salvation. /
The revelation of the eternal mystery: /
The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin /
As Gabriel announces the good tidings of grace. /
Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: /
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, ///
The Lord is with thee.

Great Evening Service

At "Lord, I call...," when the Presanctified Liturgy is served, 10 stikhera:

4 stikhera from the Triodion *(of the Day)*

6 stikhera from the Feast, in Tone 6:

Revealing to thee the pre-eternal counsel /
Gabriel came and stood before thee, O Maiden; /
And greeting thee, he said: /
'Rejoice, thou earth that had not been sown; /
Rejoice, thou burning bush that remains unconsumed; /
Rejoice, thou unsearchable depth; /
Rejoice, thou bridge that leads to heaven, /
And ladder raised on-High that Jacob saw; /
Rejoice, thou divine jar of manna; /
Rejoice, thou deliverance from the curse; ///
Rejoice, thou restoration of Adam, the Lord is with thee. *(Twice)*

'Thou dost appear to me in the form of a man,' /
Said the undefiled Maiden to the chief of the heavenly hosts; /
'How then dost thou speak to me of things that pass man's power? /
For thou hast said that God shall be with me, /
And shall take up His dwelling in my womb; /
And how, tell me, shall I become the spacious habitation /
And holy place of Him who rides upon the cherubim? /
Do not beguile me with deceit: /
For I have not known pleasure, I have not entered into wedlock. ///
How then shall I bear a child? *(Twice)*

'When God so wishes,' said the bodiless angel, /
'The order of nature is overcome, /
And what is beyond man comes to pass. /
Believe me that my sayings are true, O All-holy Lady, utterly without spot.' /
And she cried aloud, 'Let it be to me according to thy word; /
And I shall bear Him that is without flesh, who shall borrow flesh from me, /
That through this mingling He may lead man up to his ancient glory, ///
For He alone has power so to do.' *(Twice)*

Glory..., now and ever, the Entrance Hymn in the Same Tone: *(by John the Monk of Damascus)*

Gabriel the Archangel was sent from heaven /
To announce to the Virgin the glad tidings of her conceiving; /
Coming to Nazareth he pondered in amazement at this wonder, /
'How shall He who dwelleth in the heights, /
Whom none can comprehend, be born of a Virgin? /
How shall He whose throne is heaven and whose footstool is the earth /
Be held in the womb of a woman? /
He upon whom the six-winged seraphim and the many-eyed cherubim cannot gaze /
Has been pleased at a single word to be made flesh of this His creature. /
It is the Word of God who dwells within her. /
Why then do I stand here, and not say to the Maiden: /
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: /
The Lord is with thee. /
Rejoice, O pure Virgin; /
Rejoice Bride unwedded. ///
Rejoice, O Mother of Life: blessèd is the Fruit of thy womb!'

The Entrance and the Prokeimenon of the day.

The Readings from the Triodion and these Three Readings of the Feast:

The Reading from Genesis (28:10-17):

28:10 And Jacob went out from the Well of the Oath and went into Haran. 11And he lighted upon a certain place and lay down there, because the sun was set. And he took one of the stones of the place, and put it at his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. 12And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth whose top reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended on it. 13And the Lord was established upon it and said, "I am the God of thy father Abraham, and the

God of Isaac. Fear not; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed. 14And thy seed shall be as the sand of the earth, and it shall spread abroad to the sea and to the south and to the north and to the east, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed. 15And behold, I am with thee, keeping thee in every way whither thou shalt go, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done all that which I have spoken to thee of." 16And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." 17And he was afraid and said, "How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God and this is the gate of heaven."

The Reading from the Prophecy of Ezekiel (43:27-44-4):

[**T**hus saith the Lord Almighty]: 43:27And it shall come to pass from the eighth day and onward that the priests shall offer your whole-burnt offerings upon the altar and your peace offerings, and I will accept you," saith the Lord. 44:1Then He brought me back by the way of the outward gate of the sanctuary that looketh toward the east, and it was shut. 2And the Lord said unto me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass through it, because the Lord, the God of Israel, shall enter in by it, and it shall be shut. 3For the prince shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter in by the way of the porch of the gate and shall go out by the way of the same." 4And He brought me by the way of the gate that looketh toward the north over against the house, and I looked, and behold, the house of the Lord was filled with glory.

The Reading from Proverbs (9:1-11):

9:1Wisdom hath built herself a house and hath set up seven pillars. 2She hath offered her sacrifices; she hath mingled her wine in a bowl and hath also furnished her table. 3She hath sent forth her servants and called with a lofty proclamation unto the feast, saying, 4"Whoso is foolish, let him turn aside to me." And unto them that lack understanding she saith, 5"Come, eat my bread and drink wine which I have mingled for you. 6Leave foolishness, and thou shalt live and seek wisdom and keep thine understanding straight by knowledge." 7He that reproveth evil *men* shall get to himself dishonor, and he that rebuketh an ungodly *man* shall be blamed himself. 8Reprove not evil *men*, lest they hate thee; rebuke a wise *man*, and he will love thee. 9Give opportunity to a wise *man*, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just man, and he shall continue to receive. 10The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the counsel of the holy is understanding, for to know the law is the token of a good mind. 11For in this manner shalt thou live long, and years of thy life shall be added to thee.

Then, "Let my prayer arise…" with three prostrations and the rest of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, in order.

But if the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is not served, then:

At **"Lord, I call...,"** 8 stikhera: 3 from the Triodion *(of the Day)*, and 5 stikhera of the Feast, "Revealing to thee the pre-eternal counsel…"; Glory…, now and ever…; "Gabriel the Archangel was sent from heaven…." Entrance, Prokeimenon and 3 Readings of the Feast. Then, "Vouchsafe, O Lord…." At the Aposticha the stikheron of the Day from the Triodion *(twice)*, and that of the martyrs; Glory…, now and ever…; "Today, there come glad tidings of joy…." After "Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart…," the Troparion of the Feast. Litany. The prayer of St. Ephraim with 3 prostrations, and the Dismissal.

Note: If the Feast of the Annunciation falls on a Saturday or Sunday during Lent we have 7 Readings:

Two Readings of the day, then

The Reading from Exodus (3:1-8):

3:1 [**N**ow] Moses was feeding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he brought the sheep beyond the desert and came to the mountain, even to Horeb. 2And an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a fire of flame out of the bush, and he seeth that the bush burneth with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3And Moses said, "When I pass by I will see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed." 4And when the Lord saw that he drew nigh to see, the Lord called unto him out of the bush, saying, "Moses, Moses." And he said, "What is it?" 5And He said, "Draw not nigh hither. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground." 6And He said, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses turned his face away, for he was afraid to look upon God. 7And the Lord said unto Moses, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people that are in Egypt and have heard their groaning by reason of their task-masters, for I know their affliction. 8And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land and to bring them into a good land and a wide, into a land flowing with milk and honey."

The Reading from Proverbs (8:22-30):

Thus saith the Lord Almighty]: 8:22The Lord made Me the beginning of His ways for His works. 23He established Me before the age in the beginning, before He made the earth, 24even before He made the deeps, before the fountains of water came forth; 25before the mountains were settled and before all hills, He had begotten Me. 26The Lord made countries and uninhabitable places and the highest habitable parts of the world. He prepared the heaven, I was present with Him, and when He set apart His throne upon the winds, 28and when He strengthened the clouds above, and when

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He secured the fountains of the earth, [29]and when He strengthened the foundations of the earth, [30]then I was by Him arranging all things; I was that wherein He took delight, and daily rejoiced I in His presence continually.

And, the three Readings—from Genesis, Ezekiel and Proverbs *(see above).*

> ***Note:*** *If the Feast falls on a Weekday, the 3 Readings are read at Vespers on the Eve of the Feast, while the 2 Readings are read at the Vesperal Liturgy on the Day of the Feast itself.*

After the Readings, we proceed as follows: [2]

If the Feast falls on a **Thursday or Saturday** in Lent, or on **Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday in Holy Week,** we continue with the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

If the Feast falls on a **Tuesday, Wednesday, or Friday** in Lent, we continue with Vespers: "Vouchsafe, O Lord…," and then the Litany, "Let us complete our evening prayer…."

If the Feast falls on a **Sunday or Monday** in Lent, or **Monday** in Holy Week, or **Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday** in Bright Week, we conclude Great Vespers in the usual way, continuing with the Litany of Supplication and Litya.[3]

If the Feast falls on **Good Friday or Easter Sunday,** we continue with the Liturgy of St. Basil.

If the Feast falls on **Holy Saturday,** we continue with Great Vespers of Holy Friday and the procession of the *Plashchanitsa (Epitaphios).*

The Vigil Service

Great Compline

At **"God is with us...,"** the usual verses and the troparia: "The day is past…." After the first Trisagion, the troparion of the Feast; "Today is the beginning of our salvation.…" After the second Trisagion, the kontakion of the Feast: "O victorious leader…." After the Small Doxology, the Litya as usual:

At the Litya, these stikhera of the Feast, in Tone 1: *(By Byzantius)*

In the sixth month the chief of the angelic hosts /
Was sent to thee, pure Virgin, /
To declare unto thee the word of salvation /
And greet thee, saying: /
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: /

[2] *The Festal Menaion*, pp. 441-442.
[3] *The Litya* is found in the Great Compline, below.

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The Lord is with thee. /
Thou shalt bring forth a Son, begotten before the ages from the Father, ///
And He shall save His people from their sins.

(By Anatolius)
In the sixth month Gabriel the Archangel /
Was sent from heaven to the city of Nazareth in Galilee,
To bring to the Maiden glad tidings of joy. /
And coming to her he cried aloud saying: /
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: /
The Lord is with thee! /
Rejoice, thou vessel containing the Nature that cannot be contained: /
For thy blessèd womb will hold Him whom the heavens cannot hold. /
Rejoice, O Lady, thou restoration of Adam and the deliverance of Eve, ///
Thou joy of the world and great rejoicing of mankind!

Gabriel the Archangel was sent by God from heaven to the city of Nazareth of Galilee /
To bring to her the glad tidings of the strange manner of her conceiving. /
The bodiless servant was sent to the living City and the spiritual Gate /
To make know to her the condescension and the coming of the Master. /
The captain of heaven was sent to the living Pavilion of the Glory, /
To make ready an everlasting dwelling for the Creator. /
And coming before her he cried aloud: /
Rejoice, O fiery throne, more glorious by far than the living creatures with four faces; /
Rejoice, thou seat of the King of heaven; /
Rejoice, O unhewn mountain and precious vessel. /
For is thee the whole fullness of the Godhead hath bodily come to dwell, /
By the good pleasure of the everlasting Father, and the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. ///
Rejoice, O Lady, full of grace: the Lord is with thee!

If it be a **Saturday or a Sunday,** then we sing:

Glory..., in Tone 8: *(By the monk John of Damascus)*

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad: /
For the Son who is co-eternal with the Father, /
Sharing His throne and like Him without beginning, /
In His compassion and merciful love for mankind hath submitted Himself to emptying, /
According to the good pleasure and the counsel of the Father; /
And He hath gone to dwell in a Virgin's womb sanctified beforehand by the Spirit. /
O glorious Wonder!

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God is come among mankind; /
He who cannot be contained is contained within a womb; /
The Timeless One enters into time; /
O strange Wonder! /
His conception is without seed, and His emptying is past all understanding: /
So great is this Mystery! /
God empties Himself, takes on flesh, and is fashioned as a creature, /
When the angel tells the pure Virgin of her conceiving: ///
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord who hath great mercy is with thee!

Now and ever…, in Tone 2: *(by Cosmas the Monk)*

Today Gabriel announces the good tidings to her who is full of grace. /
'Rejoice, Unwedded Maiden who knowest no wedlock, /
Be not struck with dismay by my strange form,
Be not afraid, for I am an Archangel. /
Once the serpent beguiled Eve but now I announce to thee the good tidings of joy: /
O most-pure one, thou shalt remain a Virgin ///
And yet shall bear the Lord!

But if it be a **Weekday,** then we sing:

Glory…, now and ever…, "Gabriel, today announces the good tidings to her…."

At the Apostikha, these stikhera of the Saint, in Tone 4: *(by Byzantius)*

In the sixth month the Archangel Gabriel was sent to the pure Virgin, /
And with his greeting: 'Rejoice!' he brought good tidings /
That the Redeemer would come forth from her /
And so, accepting his salutation with faith /
She conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God /
Who wast pleased to become man ineffably ///
For the salvation of our souls.

Verse: From day to day proclaim the salvation of our God!

The Theotokos heard a voice she knew not /
When the Archangel brought her the glad tidings of the Annunciation; /
And accepting the salutation with faith /
She conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God. /
Therefore, in great rejoicing we also cry out to Thee: /
O God, who without change hast been made flesh from her, ///
Grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls.

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Verse: Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

Lo, our restoration is now made manifest to us: /
God is ineffably united to mankind. /
At the words of the Archangel error is laid low; /
For the Virgin receives joy, and the things of the earth have become heaven. /
The world is loosened from the ancient curse. /
Let the creation rejoice exceedingly and raise its voice to sing: ///
O Lord, our Maker and Deliverer, glory to Thee!

Glory..., now and ever…, of the Feast, in Tone 4: *(by Andrew of Jerusalem)*

Today, there come great tidings of joy: /
It is the feast of the Virgin! /
Things below are joined to things above. /
Adam is renewed and Eve set free from her ancient sorrow; /
And the tabernacle of human nature which the Lord took upon Himself, /
Making divine the substance He assumed, /
Is consecrated as a Temple of God. /
O Mystery! The manner of His emptying is unknown,
The fashion of His conceiving is ineffable! /
An angel ministers at the wonder; /
A virgin womb receives the Son. /
The Holy Spirit is sent down; the Father on-High gives His consent; /
And so the covenant is brought to pass by common counsel. /
In Him and through Him we are saved, /
And together with Gabriel let us cry aloud to the Virgin: /
'Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord is with thee! /
From thee Christ our God and our salvation has taken human nature, /
Raising it up with Himself. ///
Pray to Him that our souls may be saved.'

St. Symeon's Prayer…, and after "Our Father…, the Troparion of the Feast, in Tone 4:

Today is the beginning of our salvation. /
The revelation of the eternal mystery: /
The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin /
As Gabriel announces the good tidings of grace. /
Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: /
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, ///
The Lord is with thee.

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And the Dismissal.

Morning Service

At "God is the Lord..." the Troparion of the Feast, twice; Glory..., Saint; Now and ever…, Feast.

After the 1st Kathisma, the two sessional hymns from the Triodion, in Tone 1: *To the melody: "Thy tomb, O Savior.…"*

The mighty captain of the companies of the angels /
Drew near to the city of Nazareth and announced, O most-pure Lady, /
Of the coming of the King and Lord of the ages, saying to thee: /
'Rejoice, O blessèd Mary, thou wonder past speech and understanding, ///
Who art the restoration of mortal man,'

Glory…, now and ever…, Repeat: "The mighty captain…."

After the 2nd Kathisma, the sessional hymn, in Tone 3: *To the melody, "The beauty of virginity...."*

All creation greatly rejoices today /
For the Archangel saith thee: /
'Rejoice, O blessèd, honored and all-pure Mother of Christ God.' /
Today the proud arrogance of the serpent is brought low, /
And the fetters of our forefather's curse are loosed.' /
Therefore, with all the world we cry out to thee: ///
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: [the Lord is with thee!]

Glory…, now and ever…, Repeat: "All creation greatly rejoices today…."

Polyeley and Magnification:

With the Archangel's voice we cry aloud to thee, O pure one: Rejoice, O full of grace, the Lord is with thee!

Selected Psalm verses:

Give the King Thy justice, O God, and Thy truth, grant to His Son.
He shall descend like rain upon the fleece, like drops of rain that water the earth.

After the Polyeley, the sessional hymn, in Tone 4: *To the melody, "Joseph was amazed...."*

Gabriel from heaven /
Cried out to her that is pure and holy: /

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‘Rejoice, for in thy womb thou shalt conceive the pre-eternal God, /
Who by His word has set together the ends of the earth.’ /
Mary answered, ‘I know not man, /
How can I bear a son? /
Who has ever seen a birth without seed?’ /
Disclosing God’s purpose, the angel said to the Theotokos and Virgin: /
‘The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee ///
And the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.’

Glory…, now and ever…, another sessional hymn in the Same Tone:

Gabriel was sent to the pure Virgin, /
And announced to her ineffable joy: /
‘Thou shalt conceive without seed and suffer no corruption, /
For thou shalt bear a Son who is the pre-eternal God, /
And He will save His people from their sins.’ /
Such is the testimony of Him who sent me to cry aloud to thee: ‘O blessèd Lady, Rejoice! /
As a virgin shalt thou bear a child, ///
And after childbirth thou shalt remain Virgin.

First Antiphon of the 4th Tone (The Song of Ascents), “From my youth....”

Prokeimenon, in Tone 4:

From day to day / proclaim the salvation of our God! *Verse:* Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth!

Let every breath…

Gospel: (4) Luke 1:39-49, 56.

After Psalm 50 *(51),* the Post-Gospel stikheron, of the Feast, in Tone 2: *(from the Litya)*

Today Gabriel announces the good tidings to her who is full of grace. /
‘Rejoice, Unwedded Maiden who knowest no wedlock, /
Be not struck with dismay by my strange form,
Be not afraid, for I am an Archangel. /
Once the serpent beguiled Eve but now I announce to thee the good tidings of joy: /
O most-pure one, thou shalt remain a Virgin ///
And yet shall bear the Lord!

The Canon

The canon of the Feast, with 12 troparia, the irmosi and troparia being sung once by each kliros. The Katavasia is of the Feast, having the acrostic of the letters of the

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alphabet. *The first 8 Odes, comprising a conversation between the Archangel and the Theotokos are the composition of Theophanes.*

Ode 1

Tone 4

Irmos: I shall open my mouth filled with the Spirit, overflowing with words of praise for the Queen and Mother. I will appear feasting radiantly, joyfully praising her conceiving.

Refrain: Most-holy Theotokos save us!

Let thy forefather David sing to thee, O Lady, striking upon the harp of the Spirit: "Hearken, O daughter, to the glad voice of the angel, for he announces to thee joy past all understanding

Refrain: Most-holy Theotokos save us!

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **I**n gladness I cry to thee: incline thine ear and give heed unto me, as I tell of God's conception without seed. For thou, O Most Pure, hast found grace before the Lord such as no other woman ever found.

Glory…,

[THEOTOKOS:] **O** Angel, help me to understand the meaning of thy words. How shall what thou sayest come to pass? Tell me clearly, how shall I conceive, who am a virgin maid? And how shall I become the Mother of my Maker?

Now, and ever…,

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **T**hou dost think, so it seems, that I utter words deceitfully: and I rejoice to see thy prudence. But take courage, O Lady: form when God so wills, strange wonders easily come to pass.

Katavasia:[4] I shall open my mouth….

Ode 3

Irmos: In thy divine glory, O Theotokos, living and abounding fountain, spiritually establish thy choirs assembled in chorus, and on this feast of thy holy conceiving, make them worthy of the crowns of glory.

[THEOTOKOS:] **T**here is no more a prince of Judah's line, but the time is at hand in which Christ, the hope of the Gentiles, shall appear. But do thou make plain to me how I, being a virgin, shall bear Him?

[4] In contemporary practice, Katavasia is sung after Odes 1,3,6,8, and 9.

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[THE ARCHANGEL:] **O** Virgin, thou dost seek to know from me the manner of thy conceiving, but this is beyond all interpretation. The Holy Spirit shall overshadow thee in His creative power and shall make this come to pass.

Glory…,

[THEOTOKOS:] **M**y mother Eve, accepting the suggestion of the serpent, was banished from divine delight: and therefore I fear thy strange salutation, for I take heed lest I slip.

Now, and ever…,

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **I** am sent as the envoy of God to announce to thee the divine will. Why art thou, O most immaculate Lady, afraid of me, who rather am afraid of thee? Why. O Lady, dost thou stand in awe of me, who stands in reverent awe of thee?

Katavasia.

The Sessional hymn, in Tone 8: *To the melody, "The shepherd's pipes...."*

The Word of God is now come down upon the earth. /
The angel stood before the Virgin and cried aloud: /
Rejoice, O blessèd Lady, who alone among women hast preserved the seal of thy virginity, /
While yet receiving in thy womb the pre-eternal Word and Lord, ///
That He as God may save mankind from error.

Glory…, now and ever…, Repeat: "The Word of God is now….

Ode 4

Irmos: He who sits in glory on the Throne of divinity, Jesus the True God is come on a swift cloud: with His pure hand He has saved those who cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

[THEOTOKOS:] **I** have learned from the prophet, who foretold in times of old the coming of Emmanuel, that a certain holy Virgin should bear a child. But I long to know how the nature of mortal men should undergo union with the Godhead.

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **T**he bush that burnt with fire and yet remained unconsumed, disclosed the secret mystery that shall come to pass in thee, O Maiden, full of grace. For after childbirth thou shalt remain ever Virgin.

Glory…,

[THEOTOKOS:] **O** Gabriel, herald of the truth, shining with the radiance of Almighty God, tell me truly: how shall I, my purity remaining untouched, bear in the flesh the Word that has no body?

Now, and ever…,

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[THE ARCHANGEL:] **I** stand before thee in fear, as a servant before his mistress, and in awe I am afraid to look at thee now, O Maid. In His good pleasure shall the Word of God descend upon thee, as dew upon the fleece.

Ode 5

Irmos: All creation was awed by thy divine glory, for thou, O Virgin who knewest no wedlock, yet didst bear in thy womb the God of all; thou gavest birth to the timeless Son who grants salvation to all who exalt thee in song.

[THEOTOKOS:] **I** cannot understand the meaning of thy words. For there have often been miracles, wonders worked by the might of God, symbols and figures containing the Law. But never has a virgin borne child without knowing a man.

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **T**hou art amazed, O all-blameless Virgin; and amazing indeed is the wonder that comes to pass in thee: for thou alone shalt receive in thy womb the King of all who is to take flesh. It is thou who art prefigured by the utterances and obscure sayings of the prophets and by the symbols of the Law.

Glory…,

[THEOTOKOS:] **H**ow can He whom nothing can contain, upon whom none can gaze, dwell in the womb of a virgin who He Himself has formed? And how shall I conceive God the Word, who with the Father and the Spirit has no beginning?

Now, and ever…,

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **H**e who promised to thy forefather David that of the fruit of his body He would set upon the throne of his kingdom, He it is that has chosen thee, the only excellency of Jacob, as His spiritual dwelling-place.

Ode 6

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial, the prophet Jonah cried out in the belly of the whale; Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus, king and Lord of hosts.

[THEOTOKOS:] **R**eceiving thy glad tidings, O Gabriel, I am filled with divine joy. For thou dost speak to me of joy, a joy without end.

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **D**ivine joy is given thee, O Mother of God. All creation cries unto thee: Rejoice, O Bride of God!" For thou alone, O pure Virgin, wast foreordained to be the Mother of the Son of God.

Glory…,

[THEOTOKOS:] **M**ay the condemnation of Eve be now brought to naught through me; and through me may her debt be repaid this day. Through me may the ancient due be rendered

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up in full.

Now, and ever…,

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **G**od promised to our forefather Abraham that in his seed the Gentiles would be blest, O pure Lady; and through thee today the promise receives fulfilment.

Katavasia (Special): **L**et us clap our hands in gladness, fulfilling this divine, most solemn Feast by knowing God through the Mother of God. Let us glorify Him who was born of her.

And the Little Litany.

The Kontakion of the Feast, in Tone 8:

O victorious leader of triumphant hosts, /
We the servants delivered from all evil sing our grateful thanks to thee, O Theotokos, /
As thou dost possess invincible might, set us from every calamity, ///
So that we may sing: Rejoice, O unwedded bride!

Ikos: A prince of the angels was sent from heaven to say to the Theotokos, 'Rejoice!' And seeing Thee, O Lord, take bodily form at the sound of his bodiless voice, he was filled with amazement and stood still, and cried out to her:

Rejoice, thou through whom joy will shine forth: /
Rejoice, thou through whom the curse will cease. /
Rejoice, thou restoration of fallen Adam: /
Rejoice, thou redemption of the tears of Eve. //
Rejoice, thou height hard to climb for the thought of man: /
Rejoice, thou depth hard to perceive even for the eyes of angels. /
Rejoice, thou that art the throne of the King: /
Rejoice, thou who dost hold Him who holdeth all. //
Rejoice, thou Star who dost make the Sun appear: /
Rejoice, thou Womb of the divine incarnation. /
Rejoice, thou through whom the creation is made new: /
Rejoice, thou through whom the Creator becomes a newborn child. ///
Rejoice, O unwedded Bride, O unwedded Bride!

Ode 7

Irmos: The godly youths worshipped the Creator not the creature; they trampled on the flames boldly, singing in joy: Blessèd art Thou, and praised above all, O Lord God of our fathers.

[THEOTOKOS:] **T**hou dost bring me good tidings of divine joy, that the immaterial Light, in

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His abundant compassion, will be united to a material body; and now thou criest out to me: 'O all-pure Lady, blessèd is the Fruit of thy womb!'

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **R**ejoice, O Lady! Rejoice, O most pure Virgin! Rejoice, thou vessel wherein God is contained! Rejoice, thou candlestick of the Light, the restoration of Adam and the deliverance of Eve, holy Mountain, shining Sanctuary, and Bridal Chamber of immortality!

Glory…,

[THEOTOKOS:] **T**he descent of the Holy Spirit has purified my soul and sanctified my body: it has made me a Temple that contains God, a Tabernacle divinely adorned, a living Sanctuary, and the pure Mother of Life.

Now, and ever…,

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **I** see thee as a Lamp with many lights and as a Bridal Chamber made by God. As an Ark of gold, O spotless Maiden, receive now the Giver of the Law, who through thee has been pleased to deliver the corrupt nature of mankind.

Ode 8

Irmos: The offspring of the Theotokos saved the godly youths in the flaming furnace. He who was then prefigured has since been born on earth, and He gathers together all creation to sing: Praise the Lord, all you works, exalt Him throughout all ages.

[THE ARCHANGEL:] **'H**earken, O pure Virgin Maid: let Gabriel tell thee the counsel of the Most High that is ancient and true. Make ready to receive God: for through thee the Incomprehensible comes to dwell with mortal men. Therefore I cry rejoicing: O all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!'

[THEOTOKOS:] 'A**l**l mortal thought is overwhelmed,' answered the Virgin, 'as it ponders the strange wonders of which thou tellest me. I am filled with joy at thy words, yet am afraid: I fear lest thou deceive me, as Eve was deceived, and lead me far from God. Yet lo, thou criest out: O all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!'

[THE ARCHANGEL:] '**S**ee, thy difficulty is resolved,' said Gabriel to this. 'Thou hast well said that this matter is hard to grasp. Obey, then, the words of thin own lips: doubt not as though it were deceitful, but believe in this thing as very truth. For I cry rejoicing: O all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!'

[THEOTOKOS:] '**C**hildbirth comes from mutual love: such is the law that God has given to men,' said again she who is without reproach, 'I know not at all the pleasures of marriage: how then dost thou say that I shall bear a child? I fear lest thou speakest in guile. Yet lo, thou criest out: O all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!'

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[THE ARCHANGEL:] **'O** holy Virgin,' replied the angel, 'thou speakest to me of the customary manner whereby mortal men are born. But I tell thee of the birth of the true God. Beyond words and understanding, in ways that He alone knows, He shall take flesh of thee. Therefore, I cry rejoicing: O all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!'

Let us bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Lord!

THEOTOKOS: '**T**hou dost appear to me to speak the truth,' answered the Virgin. 'For thou hast come as an angel messenger, bringing joy to all. Since, then, I am purified in soul and body by the Spirit, be it unto me according to thy word: may God dwell in me. Unto Him I cry aloud with thee: O all ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord!'

We praise, bless, and worship the Lord, singing and exalting Him throughout all ages.

Katavasia.

Ode 9 [5]

The faithful again light their candles. The Magnificat is not sung but is replaced by the following Refrain:

Ref.: **O** earth, announce good tidings of great joy: O ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

Followed by the first irmos: 'Let every earth-born exult…,' *which is then repeated by the second (left) kliros, preceded by the same Refrain.*

Irmos: Let every earth-born exult, enlightened by the Spirit. Let the order of the angelic hosts feast in joy, honoring the sacred Feast of the Mother of God, singing: Rejoice, All-blessèd Theotokos, pure Ever-Virgin.

The second irmos now follows:

Ref.: **O** earth….

Second Irmos: Let no profane hand touch the living Ark of God, but let the lips of the faithful, singing without ceasing the words of the angel to the Theotokos, cry aloud in great joy: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord is with thee!

The remaining troparia of Ode 9 are introduced with the same Refrain: **O** earth…

Having conceived God in ways past understanding, O Maiden, thou hast escaped from the ordinances of nature. Though by nature being mortal, thou wast not subject to the

[5] In the Slav Menaion, Ode 9 of the Festal Canon is followed by the Three-Ode Canon from the Triodion, having the Refrain: *'Glory to thee, our God, Glory to Thee.'*

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established laws of motherhood. Therefore, dost thou worthily hear the salutation: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord is with thee!

How dost thou give milk, O pure Virgin? This the tongue of mortal man cannot make plain. For thou showest forth a thing unknown to nature, that utterly surpasses the usual laws of birth. Therefore, dost thou worthily hear the salutation: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord is with thee!

The Holy Scriptures speak mystically of thee, O Mother of the Most High. For Jacob saw in the days of old, the ladder that prefigured thee, and said: 'This is the stair on which God shall tread.' Therefore, dost thou worthily hear the salutation: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord is with thee!

Glory…,

The bush and the fire showed a strange marvel to Moses, the initiate in sacred things. Seeking its fulfillment in the course of time, he said: 'I shall observe it brought to pass in the pure Virgin. To her as Theotokos shall it be said: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord is with thee!

Now, and ever…,

Katavasia (Second Irmos of Ode 9): Let no profane hand….

Exapostilarion of the Feast:

The captain of the angelic host was sent by God Almighty to the pure Virgin, to announce the good tidings of a strange and secret wonder: that as man, God would be born a babe of her without seed, fashioning again the whole race of mankind. O ye people, announce the good tidings of the refashioning of the world.

Glory…, now and ever…,

Rejoice, O Theotokos, deliverance from the curse of Adam. /
Rejoice, Holy Mother of God. /
Rejoice, living Bush, [not consumed by the flames.] /
Rejoice, Lamp. Rejoice, Throne, Rejoice, Ladder and Gate. //
Rejoice, divine Chariot. /
Rejoice, swift cloud. /
Rejoice, Temple. Rejoice, Vessel of gold. Rejoice, Mountain. /
Rejoice, Tabernacle and Table. ///
Rejoice, thou release of Eve, thou release of Eve.

At the Praises, 4 stikhera, in Tone 1: *To the melody, "Joy of the ranks of heaven...."*

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Gabriel flew down from the vault of heaven /
And came to Nazareth /
And standing before the Virgin Mary, he cried to her: /
'Rejoice! Thou shalt conceive a Son, more ancient than Adam, /
The Maker of all things and the Deliverer of those who cry to thee: ///
Rejoice, O pure Virgin!' *(Twice)*

Gabriel brought from heaven good tidings to the Virgin, /
And he cried out to her: /
'Rejoice! Thou shalt conceive in thy womb Him whom the world cannot contain /
Who yet shall be contained in thee, /
And thou shalt be the bearer of Him who shone forth from the Father ///
Before the morning star.

The co-eternal of the Father without beginning, /
Not being parted from things on-High, /
Has now descended here below, /
In His infinite compassion taking pity upon fallen men, /
And assuming the poverty of Adam ///
He has put on a form that is alien to Him.

Glory..., now and ever…, of the Feast, in Tone 2:
Today is revealed the Mystery from all eternity, /
And the Son of God becomes the Son of Man, /
That, sharing in what is lower He may grant me to share in what is higher. /
In ancient times Adam was once deceived: /
He sought to become God but received not his desire. /
Now God becomes man, that He may make Adam God.
Let creation rejoice, let nature exult: /
For the Archangel stands in fear before the Virgin /
And saying to her: 'Rejoice,' he brings the joyful greeting /
Whereby our sorrow is comforted. ///
O Thou, who in thy merciful compassion wast made man, O our God, glory to Thee!

Note: If it is a **Saturday or a Sunday**, then the Great Doxology; the Troparion of the Feast; usual Litanies, and the Dismissal.

But if it be a weekday of Lent, then we sing: the first stikheron of the Apostikha from the Triodion; Reader: "We were filled in the morning…." The first stikheron is repeated, then: "And let the brightness of the Lord…," and the stikheron for the martyr once; then:

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Glory..., now and ever…, in Tone 8:

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad: /
For the Son who is co-eternal with the Father, /
Sharing His throne and like Him without beginning, /
In His compassion and merciful love for mankind hath submitted Himself to emptying, /
According to the good pleasure and the counsel of the Father; /
And He hath gone to dwell in a Virgin's womb sanctified beforehand by the Spirit. /
O glorious Wonder!
God is come among mankind; /
He who cannot be contained is contained within a womb; /
The Timeless One enters into time; /
O strange Wonder! /
His conception is without seed, and His emptying is past all understanding: /
So great is this Mystery! /
God empties Himself, takes on flesh, and is fashioned as a creature, /
When the angel tells the pure Virgin of her conceiving: ///
Rejoice, thou who art full of grace: the Lord who hath great mercy is with thee!

And the reader continues with "It is a good to give thanks unto the Lord…," the Trisagion prayers through "Our Father," the troparion of the Feast, litanies, The Prayer of St. Ephraim with three full prostrations, without the dismissal of Matins. The faithful are anointed with oil and **the First Hour** (with the Kathisma readings) begins. The troparion and kontakion of the Feast are read; the Prayer of St. Ephraim with three full prostrations; the prayer, "O Christ the true Light…," and the dismissal.

The **Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours** are read with kathismas, but without prostrations. The bells are not rung at Hours. The troparion and kontakion of the Feast are sung. During the Sixth Hour we sing the troparion of the Prophecy from the Triodion.

The **Typical Psalms** then follow. Psalm 103; Glory…, Psalm 145; Now and ever…, "Only –begotten Son…"; the Beatitudes are read quickly *(not chanted, and with no prostrations);* the Creed is not said (if the Liturgy will follow); "Remember us, O Lord…"; "Loose, remit…." After "Our Father…," the kontakion of the Feast; Lord have mercy (40 times); "More honorable than the cherubim…"; the Prayer of St. Ephraim with three full prostrations; the prayer, "O All Holy Trinity…," and the dismissal.

Liturgy

Should the Day of the Feast (March 25th) fall on **Monday through Friday in Lent, and during Holy Week** (except on Good Friday) the "Vesperal Liturgy" of St. John

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Chrysostom is celebrated beginning with the Evening Service ***as given for the Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel on March 26th,*** followed by Little Litany, Trisagion, Prokeimenon and Gospel, as indicated.

If it a Saturday in Lent, Vespers continue as usual and the Liturgy of St. John is served on March 25th.

But if it be a Sunday in Lent, Vespers continue as usual and the Liturgy of St. Basil is celebrated, but with special instructions for the Feast given in the Typicon.

Further instructions are given in the Typicon and Triodion when the Feast of the Annunciation falls within Holy Week or Bright Week.

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